

## REVIEWS

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Mikołaj Getka-Kenig and Aleksander Łupienko (eds.), *Architektura w mieście, architektura dla miasta. Społeczne i kulturowe aspekty funkcjonowania architektury na ziemiach polskich lat 1815–1914* [Architecture in the City, Architecture for the City. Social and Cultural Aspects of Functioning of Architecture in the Polish Lands, 1815–1915], Instytut Historii PAN, Warszawa, 2017, 244 pp., 25 ills, 10 diagrams

The book under review joins the tradition of socially-oriented research into nineteenth-century urban areas and their architecture. While this methodological orientation is presently the most popular perspective adopted for urban studies in Poland, having yielded several excellent publications on the country's major metropolises, it apparently "still is a rare phenomenon in the Polish soil", the editors argue in the introduction. Hence, they set for their book they have prepared an almost pioneering role of "opening the [Polish] history of art and architecture to social problems". Putting aside this blustering announcement, it has nonetheless to be pointed out that the volume's definite advantage consists in the contributions from scholars representing various disciplines of the humanities, forming altogether an interdisciplinary research space.

The volume encompasses eleven articles arranged into three sections. The scientific quality of the studies and their association with the subject-matter indicated in the book's title are quite diverse. The editorial work seems incoherent as the criteria for classification of the texts are rather poorly conceived; added to this is their casual arrangement within the subject units. While some articles clearly enter into a dialogue with one another, taking up similar threads or referring to the same notional categories, they are separated by texts not quite associated with them, which often makes it difficult to confront the research outcomes and see a clear emerging picture.

The first part of the book ('Debates around City; Urban planning, Bio-politics') contains three studies on theoretical concepts of urban area (town/city) formulated in the nineteenth and early twentieth century by the major participants of the period's 'city discourse' (architects, social activists, politicians, and hygienist physicians) and stemming from quite diverse stances. As it seems, the extensive text by Emilia Kiecko ('Some problems at the verge of the modern 'city building' trend in the Polish lands') would have fitted as the

section's opening chapter. The article outlines the key concepts which other authors elaborate upon in their respective articles. Kiecko takes as a starting point a critical review of the current state of research on the history of Polish urban planning concepts, with its overlapping ideas originating from various (mainly German, French and British) sources. Based thereon, she introduces the category of 'regenerative myth' as an interpretive key to understanding of the conception of Polish town planning theory, which helps her embed the latter in a broader socio-political context. The author stresses that the new concepts of urban construction stemmed at the turn of the twentieth century from a sense of deep crisis implied by intense urbanisation combined with quitting the traditional rules of shaping the urban space – the crisis the contemporaries found piercing. Hence, the then-modern urban planning recommended delving into the past, in view of reviving the best of its traditions – to be reread through the prism of the challenges of the time – as the antidote against the 'urban disease'. In the concepts of Polish theoreticians, this revival and regeneration was coupled, as Kiecko finds, with the national and identity-related values, and with the architecture and spatial form of urban areas being meant to be their vehicles.

In such a perspective, Kiecko analyses the programmes (authored by Antoni Lange, Alfons Gravier, Józef Polak, Jan Rakowicz, Ignacy Drexler, Józef Holewiński, Roman Feliński, and Artur Kühnel) aiming at rehabilitation of urban spaces through eliminating overpopulation and extreme poverty and seeking to upgrade the infrastructure in view of enhancing the functioning of the urban structure and ensure its harmonious development, part of which was improved health and sanitary conditions as well as aesthetics. By so 'curing' the space, Polish theoreticians intended, according to Kiecko, to attain moral and physical regeneration of inhabitants of towns and cities who were degenerated owing to the inhuman conditions prevalent in the space they lived in. This would have led to revitalised social relationships and eliminated tensions. Thereby, the concepts of modern urban planning were meant to be an efficient tool of bio-politics. Essentially, however, as Kiecko convincingly argues, the texts by Polish pioneers of modern city building reveal certain class-related or ethnic prejudices that imposed the removal of groups potentially threatening the ideal order of the reformed metropolises outside the limits of the projected reality. Therefore, in relation to workers or Jews, who allegedly were not able to meet the high hygienic standards (also, aesthetic and moral standards, in the opinion of certain authors) that were meant to prevail in modern cities, postulates were oftentimes posed that they be spatially separated from members of other classes, professions, or ethnicities. Kiecko brilliantly unveils the perversity of this narrative, which concealed the obscurantist, 'caste'-based spatial segregation that petrified the existing social hierarchies and divisions under the guise of 'modern' hygienic or health-centred arguments.

The other two texts included in the section are more monographic. The problem of dwellings for the poorest social strata in towns of the Kingdom of Poland is considered, in bio-political terms, by Kamil Śmiechowski ('The residential question in large towns of the Kingdom of Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century as a political issue'). The article analyses the changes taking place in the urban infrastructure improvement programmes in the time of the Revolution of 1905, in connection with the fiercely radicalised socio-political sentiments, followed by the proletarian revolt. As Śmiechowski notices, Adolf Suligowski in his publications from the late nineteenth century perceived the development of social housing (non-expensive but reliable) as a remedy for the hunger for dwellings, high prices of apartments and dreadful sanitary conditions; social housing was expected to revive free residential market and counteract profiteering in the construction industry. Since these recipes brought about no real improvement and did not prevent revolt, the idea was commonly expressed after the year 1905 that the housing market could only be efficiently regulated through proactive policies of municipal governments implementing appropriate institutional and legal solutions. And even though the Kingdom of Poland never saw a municipal government put in place before the First World War, the theoretical texts written irrespective of their authors' political sympathies perceived the housing question, as Śmiechowski remarks, as "one of the pillars of urban policy". The last article in this subject unit – 'Contributions of the hygiene movement to Polish urban-planning thought, 1850–1914') by Aleksander Łupienko – analyses in detail the association, indicated earlier by Emilia Kiecko, between the theoretical output of Polish hygiene movement and the emergence of the foundations of modern town planning. Łupienko traces how the opinions and statements of Polish hygienists evolved: at first, they were confined to proposing how to solve single health and sanitation problems afflicting the urban hubs; with time, they turned into a comprehensive vision of shaping of the city, the latter being approached as a multidimensional and dynamic organism. The author shows how the debates on methods of fighting dirt and diseases influenced the transformations of modern towns, how the awareness emerged of interdependence between problems such as removal of waste from the urban space, supply of clean water thereto, or ensuring access of sunrays and fresh air into residential interiors, on the one hand, and the need to alter the previous rules of architectural and urban-planning design (primarily, in terms of transport network structures, mutual functional and spatial relations between buildings, their cubic volumes, internal divisions, façade compositions, furnishings, and so on), on the other.

As declared by the editors in the introduction, the book's second part ('Public space in urban area and identity') investigates the ways in which identity – national, religious, class, etc.) affected the public space of towns or cities, particularly in the styles and symbols of architecture. The section starts

with an article by Daria Bręczewska-Kulesza ('Architecture taken advantage of as an instrument of Germanisation and new identity of town: nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Bydgoszcz as a case in point') describing the stages of transformation of Bydgoszcz from a 'Polish' town, originally incorporated by King Casimir III the Great and belonging to Poland-Lithuania continually until 1772, into a 'typical Prussian town' where intensive German colonisation soon yielded a change in the ethnic and religious relations, Prussian administration was introduced along with German names of the streets, town-planning and architectural solutions were modelled after the other German towns of the time. The article in question provokes certain methodological objections. Bręczewska-Kulesza certainly proves that the architecture of Bydgoszcz became in that time a 'tool of Germanisation' that, in effect, changed the town's cultural landscape, blurring its former visual identity and replacing it with a different one, stemming from the newly imposed authority and culture. The question remains open whether the Prussian authorities intentionally 'made use' of the town's architecture as a Germanisation instrument, as the author believes. Or, perhaps, what actually happened was that mainstream forms, deemed typically German, were used – as was common with towns then-recently incorporated in Prussia as well as those belonging to Prussia 'for ages' and thus not having to 'consistently' demonstrate anything. Bearing in mind that it is the context of elements of an architectural language that is decisive about their significance, reconstruction of the ideological dimension of the construction policy pursued by Prussian authorities would require being based on much broader research than the analysis of the forms and spatial situation of individual buildings as proposed by the author; such extensive investigation would cover archival documents and period's press, among other things.

The doubts mentioned here grow more emphatic when juxtaposing Bręczewska-Kulesza's article against the subsequent one, penned by Krzysztof Stefański ('The case of Łódź: architecture as the means of expressing ethnic and religious identity').<sup>1</sup> The researcher offers a showcase analysis of the Łódź's cosmopolitan architecture as a reflection of the complex ethnic, religious, and social situation of the town, second only to Warsaw in importance within the Kingdom. Stefański presents the construction initiatives taken, primarily, in the sphere of sacred architecture by the major communities inhabiting Łódź – the Evangelicals, Catholics, Jews (Orthodox and Reformed), and the Orthodox – that emphasised their rank in the city's life by the location, scale, and richness of forms of the temples they founded. The author stresses

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<sup>1</sup> The author builds upon his earlier findings described in the books *Architektura sakralna Łodzi w okresie przemysłowego rozwoju miasta 1821–1914* (Łódź, 1995) and *Jak zbudowano przemysłową Łódź: architektura i urbanistyka miasta w latach 1821–1914* (Łódź, 2001).

that their architectural style most frequently ensued from references to the cultural traditions of the ethnic groups concerned, which had to do with the fashion prevalent in their environment, prestigious considerations, trust in architects imported from their 'country of origin', etc.; hence, given the economic dominance and intensified construction activity of the local German community, the architecture of Łódź resembled the one of Berlin the most', as the period's press described it. For a long time, the choice of a style did not stand for a national manifestation; instead, it marked the identity and rendered the local communities culturally distinct, without a tint of ideology. According to Stefański, ethnic tensions became reflected in the discussions over the architectural form as late as toward the end of the nineteenth century, culminating on the occasion of the competition for the design of St. Stanisław Kostka's Catholic church, when enormous controversy aroused around the winner, a German architect of the Lutheran confession.

The subsequent article, by Mikołaj Getka-Kenig ('The architectural form and counteracting symbolic exclusion in urban public space: the case of the Kościuszko Mound')<sup>2</sup> complements the present outcome of research in the ideological and formal origins of the Cracow monument to Tadeusz Kościuszko (the author does not refer the reader to any related publication, though). The article first analyses the discussions around the decision to form the planned monument into a mound that would imitate the 'ancient' mounds of the legendary King Krak(us) and his daughter Wanda, highlighting the arguments that seemed decisive for those involved in the monument's erection, as far as the choice of the benchmark was concerned. The arguments included the durability of the material form of the primeval graves and the fastness of their accompanying memory recorded in folk legends, all this combined with the democratic collective effort that led to the heaping up of those graves (the Krak mound having been made "of lumps of earth thrown by the soldiers' hands onto the leader's tomb") as juxtaposed with a 'democratic' element that was already then dominant in the Commander-in-Chief myth. In the arguments put forth, the author notices and excerpts a 'peasant thread' which is coupled with direct attempts to get the peasants involved in the building of the monument (by inviting them to participate in the fundraising action or the solemn inauguration of the construction project) and the plans to set up a 'Kościuszko' settlement around the Mound, to be populated by selected 'rural families' who had 'fought under him (i.e. the Commander)'. Getka-Kenig aptly reads all these declarations and gestures

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<sup>2</sup> As the author remarks, his article is based on an excerpt from a chapter of his doctoral thesis, published in the book form as *Pomniki w Księstwie Warszawskim, Królestwie Polskim oraz Wolnym Mieście Krakowie w latach 1807–1830: komemoracja wizualno-przestrzenna a problem zasługi we „wskrzeszonej” wspólnocie narodowej* (Warszawa, 2015).

as a symbolical admission of peasants to co-participate (in a controlled and limited manner) in the national community, which coincided in time with the reform of peasant relations undertaken by the authorities of the Free City of Cracow, thus being part of their far-reaching policy. Yet, the argument whereby one of the reasons why the initiators and builders of the Kościuszko monument resolved to shape it into a simple mound was their consideration for the perceptive potential of the 'intentional' peasant recipient seems too farfetched (and sounds ahistorical), in fact.

In spite of its title ('Russian military barracks and the development of Kingdom of Poland's cities in the nineteenth century'), the subsequent article, by Mariusz Kulik, deals to a limited extent with the influence of barrack complexes on the development of the towns in which they were situated (save for a brief passage on the Warsaw Citadel, which proposes no new findings or conclusions, though). Instead, it is an interesting study showing the military, legal, economic, transport-related, and spatial determinants behind the construction of Russian barrack complexes in the Kingdom's towns, and discussing the binding guidelines regarding the form, size, or functional and compositional layouts of such complexes, which rendered such developments prevalently normalised. The last study in this subject unit, authored by Małgorzata Hanzl, corresponds with the article by Krzysztof Stefański, as it explores the peculiarity of districts populated in the nineteenth century by Jewish people, the Jewish ethnic and religious identity being epitomised, in Hanzl's view, not by public architecture (as in Stefański's concept) but by the form of urban structure ('Semantic aspects of urban structures. A case study of districts populated by Jewish people in nineteenth-century central Poland'). Making use of the methodological tools elaborated for the use of modern research into the morphology of town, the author seeks for the relationships between the culture of everyday life as typical of Jewish communities from the areas of today's Masovian and Łódź Voivodeships and the urban structures of those fragments of cities and towns, larger and smaller, populated by these communities. Aware of the enormous diversity of the lifestyles of the period's Jews (depending on their material status, religiosity, method of earning a living, background, and so on), Hanzl spotlights the places inhabited by those groups cultivating traditional Jewish culture with the most intense characteristics typical of the community. The researcher finds that the traditional Jewish quarters, concentrated within a restricted area and founded upon a strong sense of community, characteristic of Jewry, were distinct against their non-Jewish counterparts with their dense population and density of development, fragmented irregular land plots, and more intensive use of public space in that some domestic activities were transferred into backyard areas, walkways, streets, and market squares. Focused around venues of key importance to the community (synagogue, house of study, ritual baths, marketplace, etc.), individual development quarters gained a dense network

of internal connections that facilitated and stimulated social contacts. As Hanzl notices, this specific character of traditional Jewish areas, ensuing from a singular social organisation of their dwellers, perceived by the other 'city citizens' as a lack of spatial order, was thus one of the sources of anti-Jewish stereotypes mentioned by Emilia Kiecko in her above-described study.

The underlying criterion for selection of articles for the volume's part three is not quite clear ("private space in public buildings [*sic*] and residential houses in Cracow and Warsaw"). It did not provide a very useful tool for arranging the material in an order, and hence the last unit looks extremely casual and inconsistent. For whatever reason, the excellent study by Kamila Twardowska ('Modernisation and identity of urban space. The architecture of Cracow municipal primary schools in the later nineteenth/early twentieth century') opens the section, though in terms of content it certainly belongs to the group of articles on identity discourse in the urban space. It discusses the network of public schools erected by Cracow authorities for the most indigent social strata in terms of a major upgrade-oriented investment project before the First World War, and based on the architecture of these buildings shows the attempts made at the turn of the twentieth century to redefine the cultural identity of Cracow, in which the previously dominant element of tradition was enriched with the element of modernity. References to stylistic forms perceived then as indigenous (and, moreover, evoking the best times of Cracow's education) as well as the rich narrative details expressing the 'Polish' character of Galician schools coexisted in the architecture of these institutions with the solutions coming across the period's ideas of the socio-cultural function of schools as an institution, which were shaped in line with the 'modern' postulates of the hygienic movement and indications of the progressive pedagogical thought (quiet location, greenery surrounding the area, playing area delineated, spacious and well illuminated classrooms, glamorous halls, wide and bright traffic routes, quite a number of restrooms and shower booths, taps with drinkable water in gymnasiums and playgrounds, and so on).

The section's next article, by Emilia Ziółkowska, tries to reconstruct the structures of family life of Warsaw bourgeois families on the basis of spatial and functional arrangements of the premises they occupied ('The functional programme of residence interiors and the model of Warsaw bourgeois family between the Uprisings [i.e. 1831 to 1863]'), showing how patriarchal models of life were reflected in benchmark designs published by Polish architects (Adam Idźkowski and others) as well as in buildings developed for specific families – villas, palaces, and residential houses. The traditional division of roles in the family, regardless of nationality or religion, was primarily expressed, in Ziółkowska's opinion, in the layout and size of the individual rooms and in the separation of the space that corresponded with the private/family life, which was the women's domain, from the professional and representative sphere, reserved for men. The closing text, by Piotr Kilanowski ('The set-up



of residential storeys in Warsaw downtown tenement houses in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century'), discusses the spatial layout of various types of tenement houses, depending on the shape of the land plot they were founded upon. Based on penetrating archival and field research, the study appears to be almost entirely material-oriented. Somewhat incidental to the considerations on diverse residential conditions on the different storeys of Warsaw tenement houses, remarks on the scale of the period's social stratification do appear, but the presented results definitely call for a deeper interpretation, in line with the assumptions of the present edition.

Although it contains a few poorer-quality texts, the book under review is an important contribution to the development of the research on towns and cities in nineteenth-century Poland. Regardless of what the introduction announces, no new methodological framework has been imposed to such research, and no breakthrough analysis proposed; yet, the spectrum of issues subjected to scientific reflection has been enlarged and some essential findings formulated, particularly as far as the theory of nineteenth-century urban planning is concerned. All in all, the book should be regarded as a very good starting point for further studies on the phenomenon of modern city at the time it became taking shape.

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

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Frank Hadler and Matthias Middell (eds.), *Handbuch einer transnationalen Geschichte Ostmitteleuropas*, vol. 1: *Von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2017, 685 pp., 3 ill.; series: *Transnationale Geschichte*, 6

This first, and pretty extensive, volume of an ambitious publication comes as a result of long years of effort of the researchers associated with the Leipzig-based Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas (recently renamed as the Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Europa). The editors have set two tasks for themselves: firstly, probe, with use of selected case studies, to what extent the history of East Central Europe can be expressed in a transnational concept; secondly, systematise the knowledge on the existing research into the subject-matter in question. As they declare in the introducing section, 'East Central Europe' refers in their book to the Habsburg Monarchy territory and the Polish lands under Partitions. Apart from the question how much historically legitimate such a concept is (the study focuses on the latter half of the nineteenth century, the time by which the associations between the former eastern borderland of what had been Poland-Lithuania with the rest of Polish lands had grown